

Message Text

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EXDIS

FROM ENVOY WALTERS

E.O. 11652 XGDS
TAGS: PGOV, IT, VT
SUBJECT: VATICAN REACTION TO MORO ASSASSINATION

1. DURING CALLS AT VATICAN TODAY, THE POPE'S TWO CLOSEST ADVISORS, SUBSTITUTE SECRETARY OF STATE CAPRIO AND FOREIGN MINISTER CASAROLI, DISCUSSED WITH ME THEIR REACTIONS AND ASSESSMENTS OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE MOR ASSASSINATION.

2. THEY MADE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS:
--MORO'S ASSASSINATION LEAVES LEADERSHIP VACUUM IN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DC) WHICH IS VERY DANGEROUS, ESPECIALLY IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, BECAUSE THE DC PARTY WHICH RETAINED ITS UNITY REMARKABLY WELL DURING THE LONG PERIOD OF THE CRISIS, MAY IN ITS SAD AFTERMATH LOSE ITS BALANCE AND INITIATIVE TO THE COMMUNISTS (PCI) THE VATICAN IS, THEREFORE, TRYING, THROUGH PRIVATE CONTACTS WITH DC LEADERS, TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO MAINTAIN PARTY UNITY AND BOTH CAPRIO AND CASAROLI SUGGESTED THAT THE USG COULD ALSO USEFULLY DO THE SAME.
--ALL SIGNS POINT TO THE FACT THAT THE PCI WILL ATTEMPT TO USE PRESENT OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE ITS POSITION IN THE GOVERNMENTAL PROCESS AND TO GRASP THE INITIATIVE FROM THE
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DC TO DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP CAPACITY IN A CRISIS SITUATION. THE PCI, IN THE VATICAN'S VIEW, CAN POINT WITH SOME PRIDE TO THE FACT THAT IT REMAINED RESOLUTE THROUGHOUT THE CRISIS IN FAVOR OF LAW AND ORDER AND AS DEFENDER OF THE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS OF THE STATE BY OPPOSING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE BRIGADE ROSSE (BR) TERRORISTS AND BY FORTHRIGHTLY AND QUICKLY CONDEMNING BOTH THE ABDUCTION AND THE ASSASSINATION

OF MORO. SOME IN THE VATICAN BELIEVE THAT THE PCI ACTIONS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE DISCOVERY OF MORO'S BODY LEAD TO CONCLUSION THAT THE PCI, IN CONTRAST TO THE DC, EXPECTED THE ASSASSINATION, AND POINT AS EVIDENCE TO THE PROMPT ARRIVAL OF BERLINGUER AND OTHER PCI LEADERS TO THE SCENE WHERE MORO'S BODY WAS FOUND AND ALSO TO THE QUICK RESPONSE OF THE COMMUNISTS TRADE UNIONS WITH REGARD TO THE PRINTING OF POSTERS CONDEMNING THE ASSASSINATION AND IN CALLING FOR STRIKE ACTION. THEY BELIEVE THAT THE PCI HAD CONTINGENCY PLANS READY.

--THE BRIGADE ROSSE HAS DAMAGED ITS CASE THROUGH THE ASSASSINATION. HAVING FAILED TO DENT THE GOVERNMENT'S AND THE DC PARTY'S POSITION AGAINST NEGOTIATIONS, IT SEEMS MINDLESS FOR THEM TO KILL MORO. THE BRIGADE ROSSE, IN FACT, CREATED A MARTYR WITHOUT ACHIEVING THEIR OBJECTIVE.

VATICAN BELIEVES THAT DESPITE SAD AND REGRETFUL END OF MORO, THE GOI AND THE DC ARE BETTER OFF POLITICALLY TO HAVE STOOD FIRM AGAINST NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE BR. THE DC, IF IT CONTINUES TO HOLD TOGETHER, COULD PROFIT MEASURABLY FROM THE POPULAR SYMPATHY FROM THE EVENT.

--VATICAN OFFICIALS TOLD US THAT THE VATICAN, THROUGH CARDINAL POLETTI, THE POPE'S VICAR FOR ROME, WAS ATTEMPTING IN THE EARLY MORNING OF MAY 10 TO GET THE FAMILY TO AGREE TO THE HOLDING OF A MEMORIAL SERVICE IN ONE OF THE MAJOR BASILICAS. WHILE THEY DID NOT PRESS FOR FORMAL STATE FUNERAL
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THEY THOUGHT AN INFORMAL SERVICE IN A MAJOR BASILICA WOULD ALLOW GREATER OPPORTUNITY FOR MANY OF MORO'S FRIENDS TO ATTEND THAN THE SMALL PRIVATE CEREMONY WHICH WAS PREFERRED BY THE FAMILY. (NOTE: IT HAS NOW BEEN ANNOUNCED BY THE DC PARTY THAT A "COMMEMORATIVE FUNERAL MASS" WOULD BE HELD SATURDAY AT ST. JOHN LATERAN.)

--VATICAN BELIEVES THAT GOI SHOULD CONTINUE PROMPTLY WITH THE TRIAL OF THE 13 IN TURIN AND TO CONTINUE RIGOROUS EFFORTS TO SEEK OUT AND BRING TO TRIAL OTHER TERRORISTS. THE LATTER TASK THEY THOUGHT WOULD BE ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT BECAUSE THE SECURITY SERVICES ARE VERY WEAK, HAVING BEEN UNDER CONSTANT ATTACK DURING THE PAST DECADE. (THEY POINT TO THIS WEAKNESS AS THE PRINCIPAL REASON WHY THE GOI HAS FAILED TO ESTABLISH WITH ANY EXACTITUDE THE INTERNATIONAL LINKS OF THE TERRORISTS.)

3. COMMENT: CAPRIO AND CASAROLI APPEARED TO ME TO BE SERIOUSLY PREOCCUPIED ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ASSASSINATION TO ITALY'S POLITICAL STABILITY. THEY INDICATED TO ME THAT THEY WOULD WANT TO SEE ME AGAIN FOLLOWING CONSULTATIONS WITH POPE PAUL GARDNER

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